



Minutes Tempe Veterans Commission February 6, 2018

Minutes of the TEMPE VETERANS COMMISSION held on Tuesday, February 6, 6:00 p.m., at the East Valley Veterans Education Center, 3320 South Price Road, Tempe, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present:

Keith Finkle, Chair
Troy Friedman, Vice-Chair
Mario Aguirre (telephonically)
Patricia Little-Upah
David Lucier
Stephanie Michaels
Laura Skotnicki (telephonically)
William Blair

(MEMBERS) Absent:

Lauren Hyre
Michelle Loposky

City Staff Present:

Valerie Kime Trujillo, Human Services Deputy Director
Parrish Spisz, Council Aide II+

Guests Present:

RimaAnn Nelson, Veterans Affairs Medical Center
Ed Logan, Chamber of Commerce – Military Affairs Committee

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order

Chair Keith Finkle called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.
Keith shared the tragic loss of Captain Kyle Brayer, of the Fire Medical Rescue Team, who spearheaded the Veteran's Telemedicine Program for Tempe. Captain Brayer was a Marine and a Fire Captain. Chair Finkle asked for a moment of silence in Captain Brayer's honor. He also asked Valerie to get the information about services out to the Commission. Pat Upah noted that the services would be at the Scottsdale Bible Church at 10am on Friday.

Agenda Item 2 – Public Appearances

None Present

Agenda Item 3 – Review and Approval of November 28, 2017 Minutes – (Motion Required)

MOTION: Commission Member Patricia Little-Upah moved to APPROVE the minutes.

SECOND: Motion Seconded by Commission Member David Lucier.

DECISION: Minutes unanimously APPROVED

Agenda Item 4 – Review and Approval of December 12, 2017 Minutes– (Motion Required)

Patricia Little-Upah noted that the correct business for RimaAnn Nelson, Item 5, should not be VA Health Care System, but VA Medical Center

MOTION: Commission Member David Lucier moved to APPROVE the minutes.

SECOND: Motion Seconded Vice-Chair Troy Friedman.

DECISION: Minutes unanimously APPROVED

Agenda Item 5 – Presentation – RimaAnn O. Nelson, Medical Center Director – Phoenix VA Health Care System

RimaAnn Nelson, Medical Director, VA Medical Center, and her Public Relations staff person, attended the meeting to share an update on their services. Ms. Nelson shared that they have many partnerships in Arizona. She has been with the organization for 15 months. 12,200 persons have enrolled into the VA Healthcare System since her arrival, including 400 new veterans every week. Services for healthcare eligibility include 900 every week. They focus is on people, space and equipment to meet the needs of veterans in a timely manner. There are 92,000 to 93,000 unduplicated veterans registered at the VA Medical Center. Phoenix has just passed Los Angeles, CA, as the largest population. There were 1.2 million outpatient visits last year. These numbers are doubling, tripling. She asked how can they maintain this capacity? They estimate 30,000 “snow bird” veterans come each year from other states, that they do NOT receive funding for. Florida is also very busy with transient veterans. They have 90 prosthetic walk-ins per week. Their storage room is full of hundreds of items, i.e. shoes, chairs, etc., that are ordered from the home state of these veterans, in order to be here when the veteran person arrives in Arizona. They are hosting hiring fairs for hundreds of positions, including forgiving student loans and competitive salaries. There was \$150 million given in CHOICE funds last year. There was a question of the retention of the staff, and Ms. Nelson noted that there was high turnover in Primary Care, due to caring for multi-faceted healthcare issues. She noted there is electronic healthcare and telemedicine. Patients are seen inside for Primary Care and outside for Specialty Care. There is a new Southwest Clinic and a new Midtown Clinic. The Gilbert Clinic is already full, with 20,000 patients. There will be a complete renovation floor by floor that will take 4 years. 200,000 square feet of new patient clinics will be built. There are many public, private partnerships. A 70 bed hospital is located on 2nd Avenue and Indianola that was sold for \$6 million, and then donated to the VA. A new dental clinic just opened for veterans. An internal VA report has 26 performance measures that they are working on. There were 15 one-star facilities in Phoenix, which have shown a 38% improvement rate, although they are still one-star, due to perception, as only the unhappy individuals with services are filling out the surveys, so they are asking all patients to begin filling them out. The VA trains 80% of the clinicians in the USA. Students are needed for internships and shadowing opportunities. Luke Air Force base even has a respiratory unit. Ms. Nelson acknowledged the brilliant work of Captain Kyle Brayer in working with them on the new Telemedicine Program.

Commissioner Blair asked if the budget was OK for the VA at this point? Ms. Nelson noted that “no one has been turned away”

Commissioner Friedman asked what the 200,000 square feet of new space will accommodate. Ms. Nelson noted that it would “expand women’s programs and mental health services”. There is also a new program to do all open-heart surgery in house now, as well as all stints placed in the heart.

Mr. Ed Logan noted that he had an adult daughter with Spina Bifida. The Veterans Benefits Administration vets out all processes, and would then get referred to the VA Medical Center.

Commissioner Lucier noted that there are three important components for veterans including, education, wellness and success. He noted the success of Tempe's Regional Veterans Court. He asked "what can we do to advance healthcare in the East Valley"? Ms. Nelson noted that TeleHealth and TeleHealth Technology is increasing. She noted that they can get a vet on their iPad and get them seen right away. She noted 1) space for TeleHealth and technology; 2) veteran suicide is a top priority; and 3) mobile apps for behavioral health issues.

There were ideas to locate telemedical space at Valor on Eighth, the East Valley Veterans Education Center, and to connect RimaAnn with Troy Friedman at EVVEC, Laura Scotnicki at Save the Family, and Michelle Loposky at ASU.

Ms. Nelson also offered to look at Tempe zip codes to determine the concentration of veterans in the community.

Commissioner Lucier noted that 60% of the veteran are over 60 years old in Arizona.

Commissioner Upah noted the need for housing when families are coming from out of town when loved ones are in the VA Hospital. (a Fisher House type)

The VA Hospital is working to determine the best use of land related to the who, what, where of the needs, and will send the Commission emails to keep us up to date.

(Note: Stephanie Michaels left due to a family emergency.)

Agenda Item 6 – Chamber of Commerce Update/Recruitment Ed Logan, Military Affairs Committee – Tempe Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Ed Logan, from the Military Affairs Committee at the Tempe Chamber of Commerce, visited with the Commission to share that they have lost members recently, and need new members. He outlined the following related to this commitment:

- They do not offer service.
- They do recognition events.
- The membership is mostly veterans.
- Ann Gil, Chamber CEO, is pleased that their Military Committee is reaching out to the Tempe Veterans Commission
- It costs \$75 per quarter and you get 12 lunches!
- Natalie Cole at the Chamber sets up all luncheons. The next one is at Luke Air Force Base.
- They work with ASU Veterans Committee with Commissioner Lucier.
- Luke Days with the Blue Angels is coming in March.
- They do outreach with youth working on STEM/STEAM.
- Sally Harrison of the Mesa Chamber is asking to change the name of the Military Affairs Committee (MAC).
- Gilbert Chamber wants a Military Affairs Committee.

Chair Finkle noted that the Commission is looking at the partnership with the Tempe Chamber MAC to promote Commission Aguirre's team to get more businesses to become designated as "veteran supportive". Mr. Logan and the Tempe Chamber are very interested in working together. He also mentioned that Tom Sheets is in charge of SW Veterans.

Mr. Logan noted that the “Community Salutes” and “Stoles for Vets” are both a partnership with Commissioner Lucier, Army, and Mr. Logan, Air Force. Glendale Salutes is modeled after Tempe’s event, and Surprise and Peoria are both reorganizing.

Agenda Item 7 – Implementation Worksheet Submissions

Commissioner Little-Upah reviewed work that she and Commissioner Lucier had completed on an Implementation Worksheet on “Establishing the Brand”. She talked about events and places that they could get the word out about the Veterans Commission, such as the “Mayor’s State of the City”, the “Mayor’s State of the Neighborhood”, the AZ Department of Veterans Services and the AZ VA Medical Center.

Agenda Item 8 – Review of 2017 Veterans Commission Annual Report & Strategic Plan

Item tabled

Agenda Item 9 – Calendar/Event Submissions

Commissioners offered upcoming events for the Calendar:

- Community Salutes recognizing those heading out
- Veteran’ Day Parade recognizing those returning
- Hall of Fame Induction
- Medical Leadership – Biltmore
- Southwest Patriot’s Ball – Scottsdale
- There was a question of getting a table at the ACVF symposium

Mr. Logan noted the availability of a grant to get funds that requires a 501c3 nonprofit affiliated with veterans.

Commissioner Aguirre noted that he helped to get funds to start the “Book Bike” program at the Tempe Library that takes reading out to neighborhoods, including homeless, veterans, etc. He can look at supporting the State grant also.

Commissioner Aguirre also is interested in getting the list of businesses to involved them on the Veteran Supportive training by connecting with Mr. Ed Logan through the Chamber.

Agenda Item 10 – Commission Member Announcements

Commissioner Announcements included the following:

- ACMF is doing 9 areas of assessments at EVVEC. 135 assessments were done at the Phoenix Stand Down event. Commissioner Aguirre had a conversation with Judge Maxim of Tempe Courts, who would like the assessment at the Regional Veterans Court
- Commissioner Friedman noted that they have started a fundraising campaign. He has met with the Mayor and the Vice Mayor to ask for their support, as well as the Chamber and businesses. Looking to raise \$250,000 to maintain the operation of EVVEC, and \$5 million to do an endowment. It is a lofty goal, but would like to make the EVVEC self-sufficient in the next 5 years.
- Commissioner Friedman and Valerie picked up a donation of an Electric Power Chair for anyone with a disability to be used for a Veteran.
- Commissioner Aguirre noted that this is Navigator Training on March 6th in Guadalupe and Gilbert. The VA has given 8 trainings. There are 2 new Navigators now at ACMF.
- Mr. Ed Logan noted that there is an Honorary Commander Program with 16 new inductees. One of the Inductees is Barry Goldwater Jr. The 161st Air Refueling is a new connection.

- Chair Finkle noted that the Pat Tillman registration has opened up. Pat's Run will be held on Saturday, April 21st this year. The Commission may have a table there.
- Chair Finkle also asked about the Business Cards for Commissioners. Valerie will follow-up.

Agenda Item 11 – Future Agenda Items – ~~March 6, 2018~~ April 3, 2018

- Wanda Wright, Director of AZ Dept of Veterans Services, to speak at March meeting
- Joe Cufari, Home Security and Veterans Affairs, with Governor Doug Ducey as a speaker for April
- Implementation Worksheets
- Calendar/Events
- Update from Commissioner Aguirre/ACMF
- Follow-up from RimaAnn Nelson regarding Zip Codes
- List of Veteran Supportive Businesses with Ed Logan

Mr. Logan noted we should check with Michelle Loposky regarding "Golden 68 at ASU"

Agenda Item 12 - Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Next meeting will be on ~~March 6, 2018~~ April 3, 2018

Minutes Prepared by: Valerie Kime Trujillo

Reviewed by: Valerie Kime Trujillo

Keith Finkle, Chair
Tempe Veterans Commission